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Safety Precautions for Handling Bird Strike Remains

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Safety Precautions for Handling Bird Strike Remains - October 2005 Rev A

*These guidelines are provided for those who routinely collect bird remains from runways or aircraft components for bird strike identification. They are advisory in nature to provide guidance for field biologists and others concerned about highly pathogenic avian influenza. **Currently, Avian Influenza (H5N1) has NOT been reported in the United States and we are operating under the following guidelines.** These guidelines may be updated periodically.*

This information was obtained from the USGS Wildlife Health Center (**Wildlife Health Bulletin #05-03**). For more details see http://www.nwhc.usgs.gov/research/WHB/WHB_05_03.html

When handling apparently healthy wild birds in areas where HPAI H5N1 is not suspected:
Work in well-ventilated areas if working indoors. When outdoors, work upwind of birds, to the extent practical, to decrease the risk of inhaling aerosols such as dust, feathers, or dander.

Recommendations:

- *Thoroughly wash hands with soap and water (or with alcohol-based hand products if the hands are not visibly soiled). This is a very effective method for inactivating influenza viruses, including HPAI. These viruses are also inactivated with common disinfectants such as detergents, 10% household bleach, alcohol and other commercial disinfectants. The virus is more difficult to inactivate in organic material such as feces or soil.*
- *When possible, wear rubber or latex gloves that can be disinfected or disposed.*
- *Wash hands often as described above, and disinfect work surfaces and equipment between sites.*
- *Do not eat, drink, or smoke while handling animals.*
- *If there is any concern about airborne particles, wear a face mask and safety glasses when handling bird remains.*
- *Spray the aircraft impact area with 70% ethanol (not water) and wipe with a paper towel. Place the paper towel in a Ziploc bag.*

If you are involved in removing large numbers of birds or bird feces in a confined space such as when clearing pigeons or their feces from a hanger, wear a protective suit and a respirator.

Additional websites:

- US. Geological Survey Wildlife Health Center: <http://www.nwhc.usgs.gov/>
- World Health Organization:
http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/avian_faqs/en/index.html
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avian/gen-info/facts.htm>
- United Kingdom Government Health Protection Agency:
http://www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics_az/avianinfluenza/menu.htm

First and Foremost - Follow all guidance provided by your own agency or military installation. Management and Administration is encouraged to provide supplies and facilities to accommodate these guidelines.